

For Immediate Release

Contact: Betsy Hart 202-226-8555

HERSETH SANDLIN STATEMENT ON NOMINATION OF SPARKS FOR COMMISSIONER OF ADMINISTRATION FOR NATIVE AMERICANS AT HHS

Washington, DC {October 23, 2009}- President Obama recently announced that he intends to nominate Lillian Sparks, a Lakota woman of the Oglala and Rosebud Sioux Tribes, as Commissioner of the Administration for Native Americans (ANA) at the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). According to HHS, the mission of ANA is to promote the goal of self-sufficiency and cultural preservation for Native Americans by providing social and economic development opportunities through financial assistance, training, and technical assistance to eligible Tribes and Native American communities.

"I am pleased that Lillian Sparks, a Lakota woman, has been nominated as Commissioner of the Administration for Native Americans at the Department of Health and Human Services. Lillian Sparks not only brings background in the areas of health care, education, and youth to this important federal post, but throughout her career has shown commitment to communities across Indian Country. I congratulate her on her nomination and look forward to working with her to ensure the health and well-being of tribes in South Dakota and across the country."

Lillian Sparks has served as Executive Director of the National Indian Education Association (NIEA) since 2004. Prior to joining NIEA, Ms. Sparks was a staff attorney with the National Congress of American Indians where she worked on international indigenous rights, sacred sites and religious protection, and issues related to youth and healthcare. She also previously served as a law clerk for the National Indian Gaming Commission in the Department of the Interior where she, among other duties, reviewed tribal gaming regulations to ensure compliance with the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act. Ms. Sparks is a member of the National Congress of America Indians, the Native American Bar Association, and the National Trends & Services Committee. In 2004, she was named one of seven young Native American Leaders by the USA Weekend magazine. She received a Bachelor of Arts degree from Morgan State University and a Juris Doctor degree from Georgetown University Law Center.

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